

CHAPTER 28

COMBAT AIRBORNE OPERATIONS

This chapter describes combat airborne operation techniques that, due to safety restrictions, cannot be used in peacetime tactical training. Commanders must brief, rebrief, and ensure each soldier backbriefs not only his assembly plan and assault objective but also those of other units operating near his unit. Every trooper must know the scenario so that if he lands in the wrong area, he can still exercise his initiative to help accomplish the mission. Only those unit assembly aids briefed can be used, otherwise confusion can result.

28-1. MODIFICATIONS TO PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT PROCEDURES

Personnel and equipment can be dropped in any sequence that best supports the ground tactical plan. Commanders may disregard peacetime aircraft, serial, and formation interval rules.

- a. All aircraft are loaded to the maximum.
- b. The static line snap hook safety wire will not be inserted on the command HOOK UP during actual combat operations.
- c. The right connector snap of the reserve parachute has no safety wire.
- d. The waistband is not used. It is rolled and secured with a piece of masking tape to keep it out of the way.
- e. Light combat packs are used. Only necessities are carried, such as water, ammunition, food, razor, toothbrush, and change of socks. Items that may be needed quickly are never taped down.
- f. After the flight crosses into enemy territory or approaches enemy air defense systems, jumpmasters stand up and hookup the troops. If it is a long way to the DZ after hookup and equipment checks, parachutists sit on the floor; static lines are tightened after they stand up again. Therefore, if an aircraft is hit, the parachutists can immediately exit.
- g. The green light goes on at the edge of the DZ. There is no safety (buffer) distance. The red light does not go on unless the same aircraft is scheduled to continue to another (different) DZ. Parachutists continue to exit on the red light, unless the aircraft is scheduled to continue to another DZ.

h. Weapons are rigged in the M1950 weapons case. (A magazine is loaded, weapon placed on SAFE, and no round is chambered.) Handles of hand grenades are bent down to prevent falling off when the parachute opens.

i. If the jumpmasters choose to jump in that part of the stick where they can land with their assigned unit, the safety must remain near the jump door to control emergencies.

j. All parachutists “pop and go,” leaving all their air items where they land. If the DZ is under enemy attack and it is necessary to find cover and start fighting, the harness is left on. (Personnel drop weapons cases and reserves, activate both canopy release assemblies, grab the weapon, and start running off the DZ. The harness can be discarded later.)

k. Towed parachutists are automatically cut free. The jump doors are closed immediately after the jump so the aircraft formation can gain airspeed to escape and evade back to friendly lines.

l. Drop altitude is determined by coordination between the airborne commander and the air mission commander. The JTF commander makes the final jump altitude decision.

m. Regardless of type parachute, neither ADEPT nor any other form of controlled exit is used. T-10B and MC1-1B/C parachutes may be mixed in any order, on any aircraft, day or night.

n. At the JM’s command STAND BY, all parachutists close up as tight as possible. At the green light, all parachutists exit “at the double.”

o. Leaders jump their own radios. Radio frequencies should be present, short whip antennas should be screwed in, and handsets plugged in. Leader radios are ready to go immediately after landing.

p. SOIs must be sanitized so only the most essential information is carried by any one person. SOIs must be secured to the parachutist by a strong cord.

q. Maps do not include any graphics. Leaders must memorize key graphics before the assault. No maps or operations schedules that might be captured should reveal the operations plan.

28-2. MOVEMENT FROM ASSEMBLY AREAS

The quicker assault objectives are secured, the better the odds for a successful mission. Units should proceed to the assault objective IAW unit SOP.

a. Determine before the jump the minimum number of troops required to seize and secure the assault objective. When that number of men have assembled (to include any “lost” troopers from other units), the senior leader of the group strikes out for the assault objective.

b. Leave behind a two-man buddy team to inform leaders and other troops from the unit who reach the assembly area later “where everybody went.”

CAUTION

DO NOT MOVE OUT OF THE ASSEMBLY AREA WITHOUT A RADIO. IF THE GROUP IS ENGAGED IN A FIREFIGHT EN ROUTE TO OR AT THE ASSAULT OBJECTIVE, RADIO HIGHER HEADQUARTERS AS TO THE TACTICAL SITUATION.

28-3. LANDING PLAN

The development of the landing plan must be thorough. Assembly areas must be selected. A heavy drop plan with multiple HD impact points along the length and across the width of the DZ is necessary.

a. Vehicle drivers and equipment operators should land in the same sector of the DZ where the impact point for their equipment is located. Commanders must spread the HD impact points along the entire DZ; they do not saturate one small sector of the DZ, thus making a lucrative enemy target. They must consider the time and distance factors where load number 1 and load number 2 from the same aircraft will land. For example, delivering a howitzer and its prime mover from the same aircraft ensures they both land on the same DZ but physically separated. The crew should be cross-loaded accordingly.

b. GUCs adjust loads and HD impact points so howitzers and prime movers land at or near the same point. If the crew cannot locate their assigned prime mover right away, they should take the nearest one they can find and move out.

c. Crew members do not waste time looking for a particular bumper number on the DZ. If the vehicle belongs to the unit, recover it.

d. GUCs carefully plan CDS delivery. They must not drop CDS in the center of the DZ but drop it along the edge of the DZ or on the unit assembly area. If CDS is needed later, GUCs deliver it on or near the assault objective. Regardless of the decision as to where and when the CDS is needed, they must plan carefully so that backhauling is reduced.

28-4. HEAVY DROP LOADS

Minimum-essential HD loads should precede the personnel drop. Other important HD equipment should follow the assault personnel drop as soon as possible. Units cannot fight without heavy weapons, vehicles, and ammunition bundles. Peacetime safety rules require 30 minutes to an hour separation between personnel drops and HD, unless the HD is delivered first. These rules do not apply in combat.

a. Door bundles or wedge loads can be dropped from any aircraft. Bundles should be exited on the green light with troops following immediately.

b. Assembly plans do not work if troops are delivered to the wrong DZ or delivered off the DZ. Leaders should never bypass a trooper on the DZ; every parachutist wandering around the DZ should be taken under control and either pointed in the right direction or taken with the unit.

28-5. INJURED PERSONNEL

Mission completion is paramount in combat. Soldiers will want to provide aid to their buddies injured during the jump, but *speed is critical; every fighter is needed to seize and secure the assault objective*. Therefore, injured personnel are cared for as follows:

a. Medics must quickly join and move to the assault objectives with their assigned units. Medics should not stop on the DZ to care for injured parachutists (non-life-threatening casualties); injured jumpers will be cared for later.

b. Jumpers must be briefed and understand that they cannot stop on the DZ to help their buddies who were hurt during the jump and who received non-life-threatening injuries. (It is extremely important to convey this idea to troops entering combat for the first time.)

28-6. SUPPLIES

Units must always obtain more critical items than are actually needed for mission accomplishment to compensate for those items that are damaged or destroyed during the airdrop.

a. Resupply and ammunition replenishment are the parachutist's most serious problem. Regardless of rank or grade, parachutists should jump in extra LAWs, antitank mines, MAWs, mortar rounds, or radio batteries. They must not rely on CDS.

b. Minimum rations should be carried. A soldier can fight effectively for several days on one ration a day, but he cannot fight without water and ammunition.